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SONNETS
OF
LOVE AND LIFE

WRITTEN
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AND
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PROTEAN LOVE.

CHANGE fills the veins of Love; all forms he wears,
And life for him is one unceasing round
Of transmigrations, into the profound
Death-guarded kingdom, where at length he bares
His shrouded face forever. Now he glares
From passion's haggard eyes, to-morrow chills
The blood he heated, like a mist distills,
Life-filling, or is vanished unawares.

Life cannot bind him, no, nor changeless death;
Between the fingers that would grasp he slips
Like desert sands. He comes as the wind blows.
Though he be gone at passing of a breath,
Happy the life before whose door his lips
Part, with the secrets that alone he knows.

PROTEAN LOVE.

CHANGE fills the veins of Love; all forms he wears,
And life for him is one unceasing round
Of transmutations, into the profound
Death-gravels of kingdom, where at length he bares
His shrouded face forever. Now he glides
From passion's haggard eyes, to-morrow chills
The blood he heated, like a mist distills,
Life-giving, or is vanished unawares.

Life cannot bind him, no, nor changeless death;
Between the fingers that would grasp he slips
Like desert sands. He comes as the wind blows,
Though he be gone at passing of a breath,
Happy the life before whose door his life
Part with the secrets that alone he knows.

THE COMING.

a SILKEN rustle on the tufted stair,
A pause, a gentle footstep's muffled fall,
Waking its elfin echoes in the hall,
A waft of violets, and I am ware
Of her within the door, her russet hair
Framing a billowy nimbus, like a haze
About her face. She seems, standing at gaze,
A newly bodied spirit of the air.

Through the light music of her talk, a strain
Of subtle melody runs, like the theme
For a sweet song whose rhythmic yet unsung
Sleep in her heart. Weave, weave, oh, unwrought skein,
Into the chorded music of love's dream,
And let those unborn harmonies find tongue.

THE COMING.

A newly bodied spirit of the air,
About her face. She seems standing at gaze,
Framing a billowy nimbus, like a haze
Of her within the door, her russet hair
A waft of violets, and I am ware
Waking its akin echoes in the hall,
A pause, a gentle footstep's muffled fall,
SILKEN tulle on the tufted stair,

And let those unborn harmonies find tongue,
Into the chorded music of love's dream,
Sleep in her heart. Weave, weave, oh, unwrought skein,
For a sweet song whose rhythms yet unguage
Of subtle melody trust like the theme
Through the light music of her talk, a strain

THE FACE MIRRORED.

GENTLY she bent and put aside the green
Thick veil from off the mirror of the lake,
And saw her perfect self therein awake
Out of the liquid darkness,—dimly seen
At first, and quivering to life between
The parted lilies—till a zephyr bent
To kiss the fair reflection, and so sent
O'er it the wavering ripple's cryptic screen.

So was it that you stooped and straightway saw
Yourself in the dark mirror of my heart
Enshrined among its shadows, all unfit
To wreath your image. If some sudden flaw
Breathe on the glass, turn not away, nor start
To steal the trembling gladness out of it.

THE FACE MIRRORED.

So was it that you stooped and straightway saw
Yourself in the dark mirror of my heart
Flushed among its shadows all unfit
To waste your image. If some sudden flaw
Broke on the glass, turn not away, nor start
To steal the trembling gladness out of it.

O'er it the wavering night's cryptic screen
To kiss the fair reflection, and so seal
The parted lips—till a sighy bent
At first, and quivering to its bow
Out of the living garments,—dimly seen
And saw her perfect self therein awake
Thick veil from off the mirror of the lake.
HENTLY she bent and put aside the green



LIFE'S MEASURE.



HE sky above is fathomless as Fate,
Cloudless as youth, and dark as hopeless age,
With star-dust glimmering on its mystic page.
Half up the hills the lingering shadows wait
With skyward stretching arms. The sun is late,
But flings a parting show'r of red and gold.
The river's pulse is still, save where the fold
Of foamless water and the boat's prow mate.

Let the day die unheeded darkly down
Into its dusky hill-bound sepulchre.
One word of yours and morning is astir,
One touch of yours and a new world is sown,
And all the compass of a life is spanned
In the brief measure of your clasped hand.

LIFE'S MEASURE.

Of foamless water and the boat's prow mate,
The river's pulse is still save where the fold
But tinges a panting show'r of red and gold.
With skyward anemoling arms. The sun is late,
Hail up the hills the lingering shadows wait
With star-dust glimmering on its mystic page,
Cloudless as youth, and dark as hopeless age,
The sky above is faithless as Fate.



In the brief measure of your clasped hand,
And all the compass of a life is spanned
One touch of yours and a new world is sown
One word of yours and morning is again
Into its dusky hill-bound solitude.
Let the day die unheeded darkly down

THE SHROUDED HEART.



CANNOT win her, for our ways divide,
And we are far apart who once were near.
Through misty eyes I saw her go; hers clear,
Untroubled as a summer sky, denied
A mirror for my thoughts; the waterside
On cloudy days outstretches deep and blank,
And doubles not the fern upon its bank.
So calm her face; and the drear world so wide.

Let be; hid somewhere in the dreaming cloud
That wreathes Love's altar, though but smouldering
Amid the chilly ash, some embers burn
Whose touch can wake her dead heart from its shroud,
And, like the turning of the magic ring,
Back to my side her wandering footsteps turn

THE SHROUDED HEART.

CANNOT win her, for our ways divide,
And we are far apart who once were near.
Through misty eyes I saw her go; here clear,
Untroubled as a summer sky, denied
A mirror for my thoughts; the waterside
On cloudy days outstretches deep and blank,
And couples not the fern upon its bank.
So calm her face; and the great world so wide.

Let be; hid somewhere in the dreaming cloud
That wreathes Love's altar, though but smouldering
Amid the chilly air, some embers burn
Whose touch can wake her dead heart from its shroud,
And, like the turning of the magic ring,
Back to my side her wandering footsteps turn.

THE DAY'S WRAITH.



INTO the shadow of the mountain's crest
The daylight flutters like a wounded bird :
The larches stretch their prayerful arms unstirred,
The water-lily sleeps upon the breast
That suckles it. Day's brawling voices rest.
I hear your heart beat softly where I lie,
The thought that makes us one. These throbs that die
With golden legacies leave us more blest.

The ghost of this sweet hour glimmering pale
Between the braided branches beckons me
To follow its dim flight to shadow-land ;
I may not now, but mem'ry shall not fail
Hereafter when the beaming face I see
And run to clasp again its welcoming hand.

THE DAY'S WRAITH.

And run to grasp again its welcoming hand.
Henceforth when the beaming face I see
I may not now, but merrily shall not fail
To follow its dim light to shadow-land;
Between the braided branches beckons me
The ghost of this sweet hour glimmering pale
With golden legacies leave us more blest.
The thought that makes us one, These things that die
I hear your heart beat softly where I lie,
That suckles it. Day's prattling voices rest.
The water-lily sleeps upon the breast
The larches stretch their prayerful arms unstirred,
The daylight flutters like a wounded bird:
NTO the shadow of the mountain's crest

NOONTIDE SHADOW.



HE dusty road outstretches bare and white
Down to the shore; the palpitating air
With fevered pulse is quivering in the glare,
And August's fiery kiln is all alight.
Through the hot air unloosed in random flight
A hundred winged arrows swiftly slant,
Languish the breathless trees; the grasses pant
Like travellers in dusty vesture dight.

This is enough; hid from the heat and flare
That burns along the road, let me abide
Here in the quiet shadows of our love.
In speechful silence let me watch the glare
Sift through thy rosy finger-tips that hide
My eyes from all save thine that bend above.

WOODSIDE SHADY



He drew me into his arms, and when
Down to the earth the darkness lay,
With fervent words he said to me,
And I knew that this was all right,
I found the not an instant of delay,
A hundred times I saw his face,
I caught the gleam of his eyes,
Like a vision in the night.

This is a story of the life of a man
That tells of the love and the pain,
—Here is the story of the life of a man
In speechless silence he has said it all,
His heart is a story of the life of a man
My eyes have seen the life of a man

LIFE'S GUERDON.



O him who knows the weariness of strife,
The hundred disappointments, small and great,
That mould each day and night into a life
Of fiercest struggle, though it seem a fête,—
To him who faces fearlessly defeat
Of cherished plans and hopes, Love bears a balm
And waits his coming home to greet
With consolation of divinest calm.

Fate binds Life's irksome hauberk on at day,
And flings the fickle dice that turn the fray:
Love—gentle lady—waits at eventide
To loose the clasp of battered helm and greave,
To sweeten conquest, or defeat relieve,
And bid her Knight share honor at her side.

LIFE'S GUERDON.

And bid her Knight share honor at her side,
To sweeten conquest, or defeat relieve,
To lose the clasp of battered helm and greave,
Love-gentle lady—waits at eventide
And rings the little dice that turn the fray;
Fate binds Life's inkstone hither on that day,
With consolation of divinest calm,
And waits his coming home to greet
Of cherished pains and hopes, Love bears a balm
To him who faces fearlessly defeat
Of fiercest struggle, though it seem a tale—
That mould each day and night into a life
The hundred disappointments small and great,
O him who knows the weariness of strife,



THE ALPINE GLOW.

A FEW brief moments come ere day has fled,
The purple shadows in the valleys grow
Deeper and duskier, and on the snow
That crowns the soaring peaks day's lingering tread
Is bound awhile in manacles of red.

In vain the sun doth as a guerdon throw
To coming night the ruddy Alpine glow;
One flickering flush and the spent day is dead.

Sometimes the dearest faces that we know,
Fading from sight forever, leave behind
A golden radiance, like the Alpine glow
That fills with mem'ries bright the darkened mind,
Till the eternal twilight of time nears
And shrouds all mem'ries 'neath the veil of years.

THE ALPINE CLOW.

Sometimes the dearest faces that we know,
Fading from sight forever, leave behind
A golden radiance, like the Alpine glow,
That fills with memories bright the darkened mind,
Till the eternal twilight of time comes
And shrouds all memories in the veil of years.

One flickering flash and the event day is dead,
To coming night the rugged Alpine glow,
In vain the sun doth as a guard on the snow
Le bound awhile in mantles of red.
That crowns the soaring peaks, lingering tread
Deeper and darker, and on the snow
The purple shadows in the valleys grow
Few brief moments come ere day has fled.

THE UNTRELLISED VINE.



VER the casement droops a tender vine,
Rudely untrellised from the storm-worn wall,
And helplessly its slender fingers fall,
Reaching at random where the sunbeams twine
Their golden meshes, drawn in shining line
Across the floor. A languorous perfume
Floats in the still air of the silent room,
Sweet as the scent when myrrh and fire combine.

If on the unhewn wall of life there grow
Some fair, frail vine whose clinging fingers send
Their search between the crannied stones and lend
A blooming loveliness, a fragrance sweet,
Remorseless years have laid it at my feet
And wailed their mockery. 'Twas fated so.


THE UNTRELLSED VINE.

VINE the ornament of a tender vine,
 Rudely untrellised from the stem-wind's wall,
 And helplessly its slender fingers fall
 Reaching at random where the random wind
 Their golden needles drawn in whirling rain
 Across the floor. A far more certain
 Floats in the still air of the silent room
 Sweet as the scent when night and the soft moon



If on the unheaven wall of life their grow
 Some fair frail vine whose clinging fingers tend
 Their search between the clinging stems and tent
 A blooming loveliness a fragrant sweet
 Homopetals years have laid a net
 And wailed their mockery. 'Twas laid so

THE VACANT HOUSE.

 HE has gone out and shut the echoing door
Behind her going; dark and windowless
She leaves my little house; the chance caress
Of a stray sunbeam falls along the floor
Where she was wont to stand, but stays no more.
The guests she summoned, each with some fair gift,
Are vanished with her; only shadows drift
Disconsolate where fell a song before.

The subtle fragrance of spilled wine afloat,
Wedded to silence when the banqueters
Are gone, fantastic music's dying thrill
Sighing its lesson when the hands that smote
It into life are ceased, a mist that blurs
The present—only these life's chambers fill.

THE VACANT HOUSE.

HE has gone out and shut the echoing door
Behind her going; dark and windowless
She leaves my little house; the chance comes
Of a stray sunbeam falls along the floor
Where she was wont to stand, but stays no more.
The guests she summoned, each with some fair gift,
Are vanished with her; only shadows drift
Disconsolate where fell a song before.

The subtle fragrance of spilled wine floats
Wedded to silence when the parquetry
Are gone, fantastic music's dying thrill
Sighing the lesson when the hands that smote
It into life are ceased, a mist that dims
The present—only these life's chambers fill.

VEILED WOODLANDS.



HE pines' sweet balsams on the crisp air float
Hither and yon. All silently the few
Gray clouds that linger yet in heaven's blue
Drift through the azure like the phantom boat
Of childhood's dreams. No more the swelling note
Of joyous song-birds fills dull Nature's ear;
Winter with chilly fingers now is near,
To dress the forest in its sear brown coat.

Through mem'ry's woodlands Love's dim garments trail,
And from their silken folds faint perfumes sweet
As piney balsam or the spice of Crete
Steal o'er me. Ah! they cannot make
Love's shadow real, her voice awake,
When Time o'er life draws Winter's sombre veil.

VEILED WOODLANDS.

When time o'er life thrives Winter's somber veil,
Love's shadow reel, her voice awake,
Steal o'er me. All they cannot make,
As tiny balms or the spice of Crete
And from their stolen folds faint perfumes sweet
Through memory's woodlands Love's dim elements trail,
To dress the forest in the best brown coat,
Winter with chilly fingers now is near,
Of joyous song-birds till I'll Nature's ear;
Of childhood's dreams. No more the swelling note
Drift through the azure like the phantom boat
Gray clouds that linger yet in heaven's blue
Kissed and you. All silently the flow
He pines, sweet balms on the crisp air float



THE FORGOTTEN.

HE drifted back to the familiar town,
Bent with the weight of days, with snowy hair
Bleached by the storms of many a weary year,
Storm-tossed and sad, with tropic sunshine brown,
Came back to find the old place older grown,
Strange children playing in the village street,
Only a stare from them he chanced to greet,
And cobwebs on the doors his youth had known.

Only the silent sleepers on the hill
Know the poor wand'rer turning from the deep ;
Over their graves the Summer breezes sigh
In mournful melody a welcome still.
For soon at best he'll sleep the dreamless sleep,
And side by side with childhood's mem'ries lie.

THE FORGOTTEN

Only the silent sleepers on the hill
Know the poor wanderer turning from the deep,
Over their graves the summer breeze will
In mournful melody a welcome still.
For soon at best he'll sleep the greenest sleep,
And side by side with childhood's memories he
Came back to find the old place older grown,
Storm-tossed and red with tropic sunburnt brown,
Bleached by the storms of many a weary year,
Bent with the weight of days, with snowy hair
He drifted back to the familiar town.

LOVE AND LIFE



LOVE lingered on the earth's remotest verge
And impeded his weary pinions to explore
The void expanse that chafes Time's yielding shore—
The pathless way whither all ways converge.
Against his face he felt the flying surge
Of darkness tangible. His weak wings tossed
Like the sea spray in the darkness lost,
And startled Silence woke to moan his dirge.

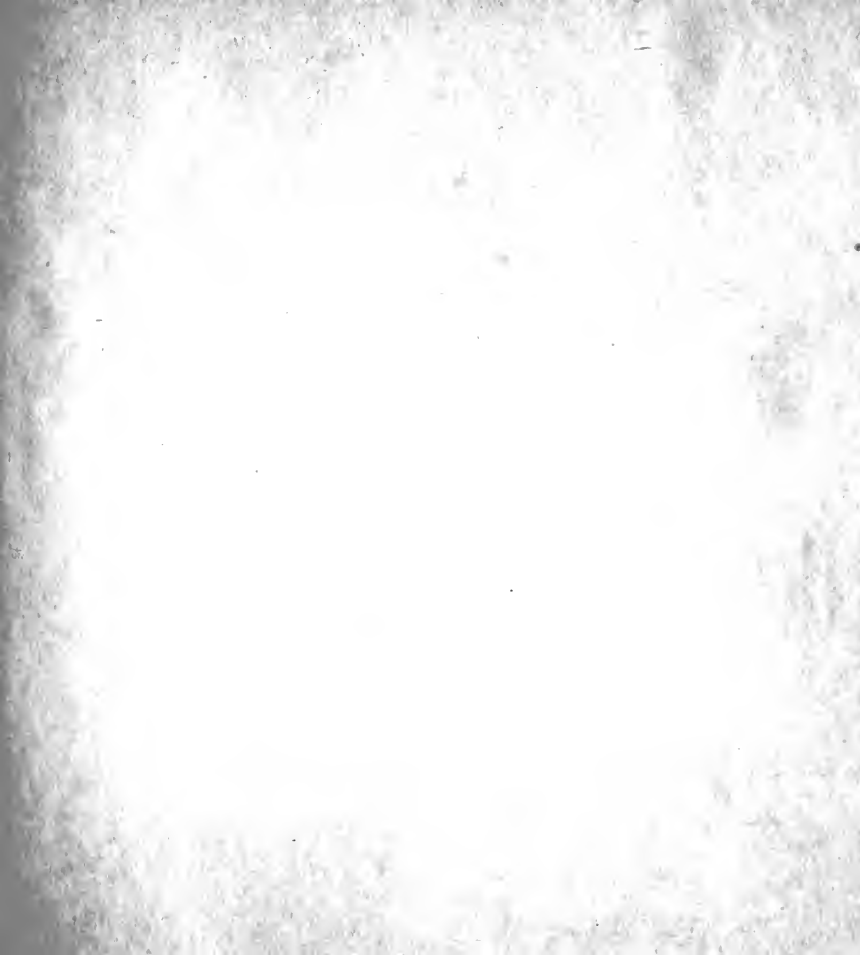
And Life despairing stood with outstretched hands
Watching Love's fading pinions fan the dusk
As one who lingers while the western skies
Bind up the day's last sheaves with golden bands,
And wonders whether evening's withered husk
Into to-morrow's morning shall arise.

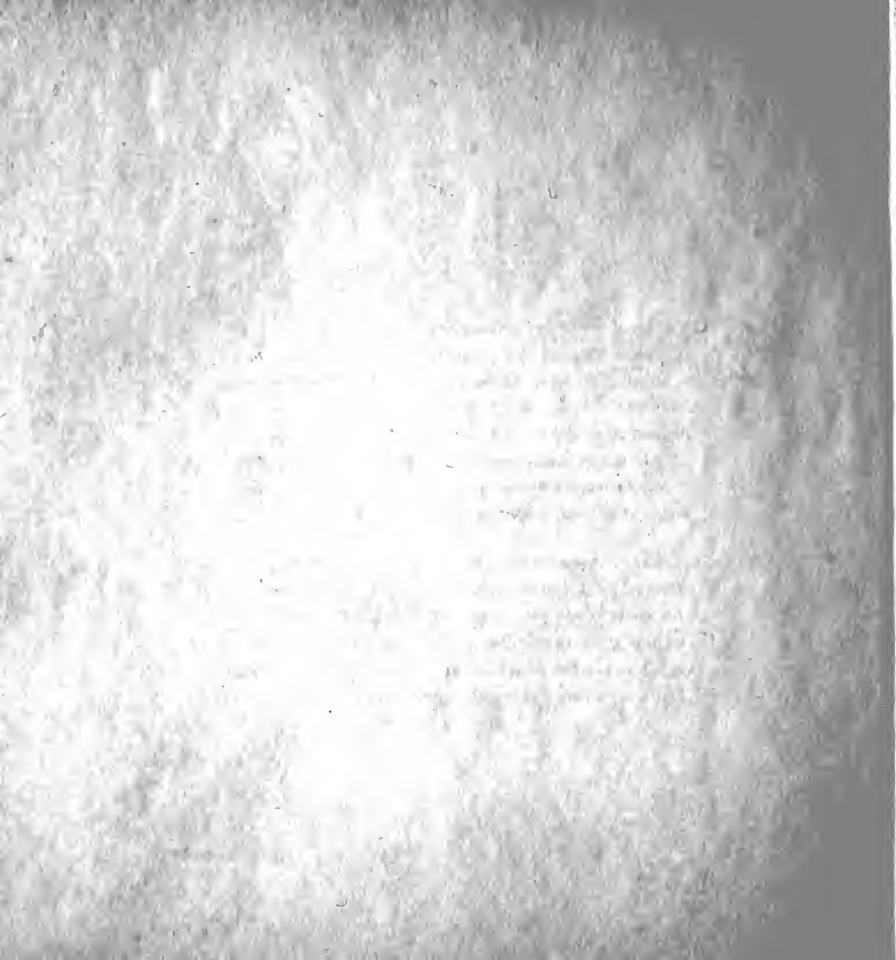
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Of darkness tangible. His weak winds tossed
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